THE SCALE: OR, WOMAN weighed with MAN.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

The Subject; and the Author's Aim. Inſcription of the Scale. Reputation for Senſe the principal Pride of Men. Their mutual Complaiſance on that Head. Women ranked by them in a lower Claſs. Satire miſapplied to flatter this abſurd Vanity. Juvenal cenſured. The great Multitude of his ſhallow Mimics. Reflections on Mr. Pope and Dr. Swift. The Introduction concluded with an Appeal from Prejudice and Vanity to Reaſon and Experience. Virtue the common Task of both Sexes. That in the Knowledge and Practice of Virtue true Senſe and true Wiſdom conſiſt. Which perform their Duty beſt in general. The Subject of Love, &c. reſerved for a Second Canto. Social Merit. Women more eminent for a Principle of Generoſity: for Humanity, Compaſſion, and the Domeſtic Offices of Life: for Piety: for Public Spirit. The Concluſion.

THE SCALE, &c.

CANTO I.

BEGIN, my Muſe, with bold unborrow'd Praiſe,
Let us the Senſe and Worth of Woman raiſe:
To their true Standard raiſe them, if we can;
And ſhame the proud aſpiring Creature, Man:
That henceforth he may curb his raſh Diſdain;
Nor bu[illegible] Prerogative on Titles vain.

Princeſs, to You, by Providence's Care,
The Royal Pattern of the Britiſh Fair;
Whoſe Wiſdom ſoars above your Rank, whoſe Worth
Exceeds your high Pre-eminence of Birth;
(From him deriv'd, whoſe Patronage and Sword
Religion's amiable Truth reſtor'd;

Who gain'd this darling Purpoſe of his Life,
But nobly loſt Dominions in the Strife)
To You whoſe Virtues, in their bright Exceſs,
Ev'n Foes to George and Liberty confeſs;
A Muſe, ambitious of an honeſt Fame,
Inſcribes the new, the long-neglected Theme:
Well-pleas'd the Strain of her Addreſs to ſee
From juſt Reproach of Adulation free.
She but re-echoes, in her guiltleſs Lays,
The Nation's Sentiments; a People's Praiſe.---

For Wiſdom's Shadow, not for Virtue's Prize,
Vain Man abſurdly with his Neighbour vies.
To be deem'd honeſt, void of Guile and Art,
Is but his ſecond humbler Pride of Heart.
The Brand of Fool, ſo the wild Paſſion runs,
He more than that of Villain fears and ſhuns.
Sick of a gaudy Diſpoſition; hence
High, Low; Rich, Poor; all claim the Title, Senſe.

This great Preliminary Claim confeſt;
They meet, like Kings, and compromiſe the reſt.
Man will to Man a Sort of Homage do;
Both wiſe, but one the wiſer of the two:
For both, ſo nicely pois'd Pretenſions are,
Of Senſe inherit a ſufficient Share.

On their own Excellence this Vote they paſs;
But rank the Women in a lower Claſs.
Thus each He-Fool, whom ſuch vain Maxims guide,
Sees a whole Sex beneath him, in his Pride.

Not to reform, rather to flatter Men,
Foul Satire ſeizes her malignant Pen.
A grateful Victim to the vicious Heart,
Worth feels the Sting of her abuſive Art:
While chiefly Woman, helpleſs Woman bleeds.
On her each rhiming Moth of Scandal feeds;
And, ſure his ſhallow Reader's Taſte to hit,
Exhauſts on her the Pittance of his Wit.

Rome's Satiriſt, the foremoſt of the Band,
Who paints fair Virtue with a Maſter's Hand,
But brutal Luſt indelicately draws,
Leads up the Van in this ungen'rous Cauſe;
Attacks alike the Living and the Dead,
And withers half the Laurels on his Head.

A thouſand Mimics, with a borrow'd Grin,
With Wit not their's, on the ſame Subject ſin:
But theſe, ſcarce knowing how to rhime or rail,
Diſgrac'd, in their unmanly Purpoſe fail.

Shame to themſelves their pilfer'd Satires bring:
Their harmleſs Scandal is without a Sting:
Be therefore they, the loweſt of their Kind,
Too low for Notice, in Oblivion join'd.

Which ſhould to Woman do the wittier Wrong,
Of late two Giant Writers labour'd long.
Friends, from the low Diſeaſe of Envy clear,
They charm'd, with rival Wit, the Public Ear.
One to the Summit of Parnaſſus roſe:
The ſecond ſtoop'd, and ſweep'd the Prize of Proſe.
With Fame, with ſuch a Wealth of Genius bleſt;
By no juſt Cauſe, no ſeemly Motive preſt;
Why ſhould (alas!) the celebrated Pair,
Uninjur'd, raſhly ſatirize the Fair?

Thee chiefly, great among the greateſt Names,
Immortal Bard, my Muſe reluctant blames:
Thee ſkill'd the ſparkling Gem of Worth to raiſe,
And bid it glow with Elegance of Praiſe.
Was it for thee, to Virtue's Friends a Friend,
From Virtue's Side her Votaries to rend?
In thee, Man's Friend, was it a ſeemly Drift
To vie with ſuch a Miſanthrope as S---ft;
Whoſe Satire oft Spleen, Party-Zeal, Caprice
Spirit with Venom, and devote to Vice?

No. Thine the chaſte, thine was the moral Page;
Inſpir'd to mend or ſhame a vicious Age.

In either Sex true Worth, by Satire wrong'd,
To ſuch a noble Advocate belong'd.
That Muſe which Women of their Right bereaves,
Which ſcarcely Room for Female Virtue leaves;
That Muſe which draws them changeful as the Wind,
Which rainbows on a Cloud their fickle Mind:
Had ſhe been zealous to defend their Cauſe;
She more had merited the World's Applauſe.

To rouze and aggravate the Pride of Men,
Alas! what needed Satire's partial Pen?
Women too much already we deſpis'd;
Too much our native Privileges priz'd.
No longer let unequal Weights prevail.
Come, let us poiſe Pretenſions in the Scale.

Nature, ſupremely wiſe in her Deſigns,
To both their proper Provinces aſſigns:
Virtue their common Task, their End, their Good,
But Virtue vary'd to their Sex's Mood:
So vary'd as the Rules of Life require;
Plain Rules which Heav'n and Reaſon's Light inſpire.

Reaſon's

Reaſon's great Excellence, her higheſt Art
Appears in faſhioning the Moral Heart:
In clearly teaching human Minds to know
What they to God, themſelves, their Neighbour owe;
How to diſcern, with Penetration nice,
The Boundaries and firſt Degrees of Vice.
True Senſe in ſuch high Knowledge chiefly lies;
And ſure to practiſe it is to be wiſe.

Which of the two perform their Duty beſt?
If that be made the Touch-Stone and the Teſt;
To Life, my Muſe, to common Life refer,
For this plain Truth, That fewer Women err;
Still fewer to the Pitch of Man offend.
Their Vices curbed, in certain Limits endu'd
We, boldly bad, deſpiſe the Checks of Blame;
While Woman ſins with the Reſtraint of Shame.
More rooted in her Heart, by Maxims right,
Reluctant Virtue ſeldom leaves her quite:
Except when Ravagers, the Sons of Luſt,
Have laid her Virgin Honour in the Duſt.

Pure Love to paint, high Source of human Bliſs,
To paint the Paſſion in its wild Exceſs;
Of either Sex, when Love or Luſt prevails,
To weigh the Merit in contending Scales;

Might,

Might, as a Part conſider'd, ſeem too long:
Be therefore this, in copious Matter ſtrong,
Singly the Theme of a ſucceeding Song.

Say, Muſe, in ſocial Merit which excells?----
With Woman chief the Charm of Bounty dwells.
To Worth a zealous Patron, in her Heart,
She does, or would the Recompence impart:
But, Virtue, mourn; and, high Pretenſions, fall;
For Woman's Power to recompenſe is ſmall.
By partial Law, the lordly Makers hold
Undue Proportions of their much-lov'd Gold.
Of this, their Idol, if you would partake,
Mean Courtſhip to ſome guilty Paſſion make.
Serve that; their Pimp, their Paraſite, their Tool;
Their Wiſdom's, any Thing but Virtue's, Fool.
Miſers to Worth, not unobſerv'd but clear;
On Vice they laviſh Thouſands by the Year.

Wouldſt thou grow wealthy; to Diſtinction riſe?
Call the Knave honeſt; call the Blockhead wiſe:
To Dunces Wit, give Freedom to the Slave;
And flatter Cowards with the Title, Brave.
Extol, this Maxim will avail thee moſt,
The vain Man's Head at ev'ry Rival's Coſt.

More ſenſible the Fair of human Woe,
Lend ſweet Attention to the Tears that flow:
Touch'd with the Mourner's Misery, they grieve;
Prone, while they weep and liſten, to relieve.
Unfeeling Man aſſumes the Face of Art:
His Grief is often but an Actor's Part.
All thine, O Woman, is the bleeding Heart.

A Crowd of Virtues hence, as from their Root,
Fair to the Sight, like lovely Roſes, ſhoot:
Virtues which harmonize the Frame within;
And purge the Paſſions from the Droſs of Sin.
For all domeſtic Offices of Life
Which qualify the Mother, Daughter, Wife.
Where this high Principle of Goodneſs fails,
Plain Vice or mask'd Hypocriſy prevails.
Without Humanity; the ſpecious Strain,
The Garb of Heroes, and of Saints, is vain.

Come, Piety, thou Queen of Virtues; here,
Attended by thy Siſter Truth, appear:
Of fooliſh wicked Man the Jeſt and Scorn,
Come, and thy female Votaries adorn.
Juſtice, their Stamp of Character to raiſe,
Adds here the faireſt brighteſt Beam of Praiſe.

At Heav'n's high Providence we laugh or fret:
But wiſer Woman fears her Maker yet.

Where moſt, where leaſt does Love of Country fail?
Place, ponder Public Spirit in the Scale.
In former Ages this was Britain's Boaſt.
Millions of Lives in the great Cauſe were loſt.
By this her Heroes and her Patriots led,
On War's grim Theatre, on Scaffolds bled.
Zealous and panting for their Country's Bliſs,
Her Hambdens, Sidneys, Ruſſels bled for this.
All elſe, as the Majeſtic Cauſe drew near,
Did worthleſs to the Great and Good appear:
While yet vile Luxury was little known;
Nor viler Avarice did Britons own.

Pelf, Pleaſure of their vicious Sons the Taſk!
Boldly we worſhip Gold without a Maſk.
Gain is the Point, the Principle profeſt.
Now Public Spirit grows a Public Jeſt.
Poſterity! (We laugh, we reaſon thus)
What has Poſterity to do with us?
Juſt for our Time the gaſping Nation ſave:
'Tis all we modern, mole-ey'd Mortals crave.

While, Woman, here thy Virtue blazes forth;
It crowns thy Triumph in the Scale of Worth.
By Man this Subject wantonly profan'd,
Has ever ſacred in thy Thoughts remain'd.
On ſuch plain Points, where human Senſe begins,
No Female Wit, no She-Blaſphemer ſins.
Man's is the Profanation; his the Crime,
Unknown, unbluſh'd for, in our Father's Time.

Ye Fair, your Wiſdom and your Charms exert,
To mend and moralize the ſmitten Heart.
Before you liſten to the Tales of Love;
Our Paſſion firſt, and Principles improve.
But chief, O chiefly let the Mother's Tongue
With early Love of Country taint her Young;
Sow ſoon, deep ſow the Seeds of future Fame;
And teach ev'n Babes to liſp Britannia's Name.

THE SCALE:

OR,

WOMAN weighed with MAN.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

An Introductory Dialogue between a Critic and the Author. Seducers of Women ſatirized. Their deceitful and barbarous Proceedings laid open. How fatal the Conſequences are to the Seduced; and what an iniquitous Sentence is paſſed upon them. Who the chief Seducers. The Gratification of their Luſt a ſort of Human Sacrifice. Their frothy Defence and Reaſonings expoſed. Honour, their boaſted Rule of Action, explained and defined. What Women Honour ſkreens; and whom it marks for Deſtruction. The baſe Deceit and Frauds which Honour warrants. Mortal Reſentment againſt Friends who violate the Marriage-Bed; on what grounded: the Conſequence. A Suppoſition in Favour of Honour; and a fair Inference from that Suppoſition: Men of Honour being the Judges. The whole Compariſon in this Article briefly ſtated; and a Deciſion given.—Love the Subject. Deſcribed, as dictated by Nature, and governed by Reaſon and Virtue. What the Teſt of Love; and why few Men fit to bear the Trial. How the falſe Paſſion operates in Men before and after Marriage. Effects which their Change of Behaviour naturally produces. Eſteem the ſole Preſervative of Love. An important Caution to Men on this Head. Female Love more influenced by real or ſeeming Merit; more conſtant and more generous: why Romantic in ſome Degree. The ſervile Art and the Mercenary Views of Men branded. Another capital Deciſion in Favour of Women. By Way of Concluſion, the Dialogue reſumed between the Author and the Critic.

THE SCALE, &c.

CANTO II.

" ALL this and more they will object. Forbear.
" In Time be caution'd by your Friends to fear."---
Fear whom? Fear what? No; bid me rather hope.---
" Have you not cenſur'd Swift; and cenſur'd Pope?"---
As Wits, both are the Subject of my Praiſe.
My Muſe between the two divides the Bays.---
" But then ſhe wounds them in a dearer Part;
" Their moral Character; their hidden Heart."---
Not Pope. Him (mark the Cenſure in it's Place)
She ſcarcely could with higher Titles grace.---
" On both allow the Cenſure to be fair;
" Why ſhock their fond Admirers? Have a Care:
" High ſtands, all Envy dumb, their preſent Fame."---
I muſt, I will, where Reaſon bids me, blame.---

" The

" The Muſe, the Miſtreſs, or the Friend we love,
" Who cenſure fairly, ſtill our Anger move.
" Ev'n candid L----n may not approve."
To ſuch as him I could, with honeſt Zeal,
For the whole Juſtice of my Cauſe appeal.
'Mong thoſe for a diſhonour'd Sex who plead,
See L------n the Van of Virtue lead.
Of Female Worth, the Bliſs which Women bring,
How ſweetly does the plaintive Heroe ſing:
While o'er an Angel's, a Clariſſa's Urn
His Heart and all th' aſſembled Muſes mourn?
A L------n, ye Fair, is ſeldom found:
But artful wicked Lovelaces abound.

Riſe, Satire; with indignant Pencil, draw
Thoſe Ravagers who 'ſcape the Scourge of Law:
Who, Siren-like, invade the Virgin's Breaſt;
Keen to devour her Innocence and Reſt.
Amidſt their Vows, their Adulation, Lies,
Unmaſk the Traytors to the Fair-one's Eyes.

Aſſoon as Beauty's early Bloſſom blows;
While yet the Mind nor Fraud nor Falſhood knows;
By Snares, which ſcarcely wiſer Women ſhun,
The Novice falls; by ſpecious Snares undone.

In

In artful Guiſe, a Crowd of Foes appear,
Who buzz Eſteem and Paſſion in her Ear.
Virtue's vain Title, Honour's boaſted Name,
They make the Maſk and Vehicle of Shame;
Highly reſpectful in their Love, 'till Art
Gives full Poſſeſſion of the Fair-one's Heart:
But then, no longer lowly Vaſſals, they
Seem metamorphos'd into Beaſts of Prey.
Uncheck'd by Pity, conſcious of their Pow'r,
Like Wolves, they watch the firſt unguarded Hour;
Spring to their Game, remorſeleſs in their Haſte;
And lay the ſacred Fold of Virtue waſte.

From that dire Moment Hell and Horrour riſe:
Peace from her violated Manſion flies.
Hourly with Sighs the troubled Boſom heaves;
Which Hope, Life's lateſt Conſolation leaves.
Succeeds, in chearful Innocence's room,
An everlaſting, a remorſeful Gloom.
Of Honour, in her conſcious Mind, bereft;
Without a Friend, to ſave or pity, left;
Ev'n by the Robber of her Peace and Fame,
Left ſoon to Poverty, Deriſion, Shame;
Oblig'd to proſtitute herſelf for Hire,
The Sport of Drunkards and of lewd Deſire:

What

What can the poor deſerted Sinner do?
Loſt by Degrees, all Worth forſakes her too.
Perhaps, to make the Tragic Scene compleat,
Herſelf is doom'd to periſh in the Street.

Be ſtill, raſh Cenſure, ſhall the Pride of Man
Preſume the Depths of Providence to ſcan?
Howe'er by purblind Mortals underſtood;
Theſe are, ev'n where unfathomable, good.
Yet ſure th' unequal Lot of Woman here,
Compar'd to lordly Man's, may ſeem ſevere.
What ſcarce a Treſpaſs is allow'd in him,
In her is deem'd a Death-deſerving Crime;
A Stain, a Wound, ſo mortal and impure,
No Tears can waſh it, no Repentance cure:
Harſh Sentence on the fair Offender paſt,
By ſinful Man: and therefore not the laſt.
'Tis well for her, ſince not on Earth forgiven;
The Scale of Man is not the Scale of Heaven.

Young Men, to you, the Robbers of the Fair,
Who make their Ruin your Delight and Care;
Who firſt beat down their Virtue to the Ground,
And whiſper next the ſhameful Triumph round;
Whom Reaſon's Voice has long reprov'd in vain:
Satire to you directs her angry Strain.

Groſs vicious Senſe and Habits unrefin'd
Mar ev'ry noble Function of the Mind.
You ſee perhaps, but will not feel the Force,
The Charms of Virtue's amiable Courſe:
Elſe, for a momentary guilty Guſt,
For a looſe Rapture of unbridled Luſt;
You would not cancel Nature's ſacred Ties;
Nor joy, like Fiends, in human Sacrifice.

When ſtrongly puſh'd; to parry Reaſon's Stroke,
One utters, in his own Defence, a Joke.
A ſecond loudly laughs, as in a Fit:
Another anſwers with a Flaſh of Wit.
Some few perhaps, more void of Shame, pretend
That thus they chiefly compaſs Nature's End;
Nature which here impoſes no Reſtraint;
Nor rates by this the Sinner and the Saint.
A Woman's free Compliance, Will, Deſire,
Are all, they ſay, which Nature's Rules require.

What Will?----Young, open, with an honeſt Heart,
She falls a Prey to the Seducer's Art;
To Shews of Honour, which deceitful prove;
To Rakes, to Sharpers at the Game of Love.
Is this the fair Compliance, Will, Deſire,
Which Nature, Juſtice, Equity require?

Learn, weak and wilful Foes to Reaſon, hence
How wild a War ye wage with common Senſe:
In that diſtracted Situation place
Some near Relation.---Frame a milder Caſe,
If this ſeem ſhocking; and ſuppoſe that, ſtill
She ſafe, the Man has only ſinn'd in Will.---
"Ruin my Siſter! Stab my Daughter's Fame!
"Mark them for Harlots with the Brand of Shame!
"Out, angry Sword; avenging Weapons, riſe:
"He, who but offers ſuch Diſhonour, dies."---
Whence theſe new Sentiments, this high-flown Wrath;
This loud Denial of your former Faith?
Would not your conſcious Heart at once rejoin,
"The Caſe is alter'd; for the Caſe is mine?"---
By partial Self ſuch the Diſtinctions thrown
'Twixt other Men's Pretenſions and our own.

Inſtead of Virtue, long caſhier'd and loſt,
Another Guide, Honour's ſtrict Rule, you boaſt.
Say, what is Honour? Let it be defin'd.
A Farce, a Mixture of a motley Kind:
Part Vice, Part Virtue; Gothic in it's Frame;
Proceeding half from Pride and half from Shame:
A Monſter foul within and fair without;
An Angel upwards, with a cloven Foot.

To

To give a Definition more conciſe;
Honour is Virtue reconcil'd to Vice.

Chiefly from rampant guileful Honour's Snare
The Rules and Roof of Friendſhip ſkreen the Fair.
Young Virgins too, for high Deſcent eſteem'd,
Are ſacred and inviolable deem'd.
In either Caſe who Crimes of Love commit,
Muſt ſtrait the faſhionable Title quit.
Here Honour's Laws with Reaſon's Rule agree:
But then all other lewd Attempts are free;
Wives, Siſters, Daughters, a promiſcuous Game,
Preſum'd fair Objects of a guilty Flame.

Not leſs the Means are than the Purpoſe foul;
Fraud and Deceit, a Maſquerade of Soul.
Candour and Truth, the lovely Twins, retire;
Far baniſh'd from theſe Scenes of looſe Deſire.
Who Vows indeed, who ſtrict Engagements break,
Are tax'd with high Diſhonour: Fools! to make
A needleſs Waſte of Promiſes preciſe;
Where unreprov'd the whole Behaviour lies:
Where Frauds in Action, ſpight of Common Senſe,
The Giant Honour titles fair at once.

Enrag'd,

Enrag'd, why does your Friend, with boiſt'rous Strain,
When violated in his Wife, complain;
But that high Wrong is done, dire Miſchief wrought,
Beyond Forgiveneſs in his Scale of Thought?
To wrong a Friend, Foe, Stranger, whom you pleaſe;
Is but one Crime, which differs in Degrees:
And Crimes, the gloomy Subject of Remorſe,
Have only this Diſtinction, bad or worſe.

Ev'n if the Sin conſiſted leſs in Luſt,
Than in the Breach of Friendſhip and of Truſt;
That Reaſon would alone ſuffice to prove
A more unworthy Breach of Truſt in Love.
Conceiv'd a Man of Probity, not Art;
As ſuch admitted to the Fair-one's Heart;
Strongly belov'd, confided in, eſteem'd;
Nay the Protector of her Honour deem'd:
Who, thus intruſted, in an evil Hour,
Half ſteals, half raviſhes fair Virtue's Flow'r;
Blaſts her that loves him with a lewd Embrace,
And robs her of her deareſt Jewel, Peace:
What Name, what Title is his proper Due?
Silent my Pen:—ſay, Man of Honour, thou.

Thus, adverſe in the Scales, here Worth appears,
Rich but unripen'd by the School of Years;

There

There Luſt, lurking beneath the Maſk of Love;
In Heart a Vultur, but in Form a Dove.
Weigh them; the Tempters with the Tempted weigh;
The Women prey'd on with the Men of Prey,
(Of whom ſo long the Liſt in either Claſs,
They might for almoſt half the Species paſs)
Woman, the Dupe of Honour, ſuffers moſt:
But viler Man has little Cauſe to boaſt.
When fairly weigh'd; in ſpight of Honour's Dream;
His Scale is lighter, and will kick the Beam.

Love next my nobler Theme. Explain it Muſe.
Reſcue great Nature from a long Abuſe.
Off with the Maſk of Ages. Let us ſee
The Paſſion in it's primitive Degree:
Nor loſt in Clouds, nor crawling in the Duſt;
Nor mix'd with mad Idolatry nor Luſt.
Deſcribe Affection where Eſteem preſides;
Which Reaſon dictates, and which Virtue guides.

Such who by Nature's wiſe Preſcription love,
Whoſe Flame their Heads as well as Hearts approve;
Such only this high Principle inſpires
With ſtrong indeed, but elegant Deſires:
For Love is Friendſhip of an upper Caſt;
Like Metal ripen'd into Gold at laſt.

In leſs Eſteem, who reaſons thus, reputes
The groſſer Appetites, the Bliſs of Brutes.
His higheſt Nuptial Happineſs he finds
Plac'd in the nobler Intercourſe of Minds.
From thence that generous Affection flows,
Which in the duly ſmitten Boſom glows:
Which never from the much-lov'd Object errs;
But this to Self, with comely Zeal, prefers.

Who, madly with the Fire of Beauty ſmit,
The Force of Wiſdom, or the Charms of Wit,
Eyes his own Pleaſure, in his am'rous Mood;
Nor chiefly rates the Fair-one's Fame and Good;
Courting on any Terms his Paſſion's Eaſe:
Not Love, the Rage of Luſt is his Diſeaſe.
This the great Witneſs; this the Lover's Teſt,
By which to prove the Paſſion in his Breaſt.

Few Men, if Men would ſpeak with Candour here,
Could well the ſtrict Examination bear.
They wiſely to conceal their inward State,
Of pure diſintereſted Paſſion prate.
Themſelves may ſometimes think it no Diſguiſe;
Deceiv'd: for rank Poſſeſſion is the Prize,
On which they fix, with ſteady View, their Eyes.

Angelic

Angelic Extaſies, Flames, Darts, Racks, Wheels
(Whims which a hurt Imagination feels)
All end in this: and hence we plainly find
Why Love a Riddle deem'd, and Cupid blind.

While raging Paſſion in the Boſom burns,
Madden'd with Joys and Jealouſy by Turns;
While Flames and Fire in their full Force remain;
Before Poſſeſſion cures the ſighing Swain;
While Luſt lies hid in Wonder and Eſteem:
How pure his Wiſhes, his Pretenſions ſeem!
His Lordly Pride of Sex humbles it's Creſt:
Since greatly wiſe one Woman is confeſt.
" Thy Words, my Fair, are as thy Looks divine;
" And all Minerva's Epithets are thine.
" Me bleſt, if thou propitious prove! Since Heaven
" Has ſuch a Phœnix to my Paſſion given,
" That this, for Life, muſt ever laſt the ſame;
" A perfect, pure and undiminiſh'd Flame."

So talks, and often ſo believes, in Truth,
The love-ſick, green and unexperienc'd Youth.
His beardleſs Underſtanding, void of Art,
So talks in pure Simplicity of Heart.
Of ſuch a Prelude, wild, romantic, vain,
The ſure, the fatal Conſequence is plain.

No ſooner is the Magic Zone unloos'd
(Long-wiſh'd-for Bliſs, to lawleſs Luſt refus'd)
When hymen'd Virtue to the Lover bends;
Forthwith his Dream of Bliſs Elyſian ends.
Now rank Idolatry prevails no more:
For Fancy's gay Delirium is o'er.
She, whoſe leaſt Frown did the pale Sigher awe;
Whoſe Will was Wiſdom, and whoſe Word a Law;
No Goddeſs now nor Angel deem'd, at beſt
Is, as a pretty prattling Fool, careſt.
Let her once aim at Cenſure or Advice:
" I grant your Table and your Toilet nice.
" No Woman lives with a genteeler Air.
" Dreſs, Cards and Cuſtards are the Sex's Care.
" Mere houſhold Wiſdom is the Taſk aſſign'd.
" This therefore, as your proper Province, mind:
" But, for all Points of higher Reaſon; theſe
" Are our Prerogative, if Women pleaſe."

Depriv'd, but not unconſcious of her Claim;
Muſt ſhe not feel ſuch foul Contempt and Shame?
Feel and reſent this ſudden Breach of Vows?
While at her Feet perhaps a Stranger bows;
Marks the wild Scene of Conjugal Neglect;
And breaths his guilty Paſſion with Reſpect.

All other Hopes of laſting Love are vain:
Eſteem alone is Nature's triple Chain.
Where this ſtrong Fetter fails on either Side,
Soon will unſeemly Strife their Hearts divide.
If Men had Prudence and a proper Fear,
They would beſtow their chief Attention here.
Inſtead of checking, with injurious Bit,
The Modeſt Sallies of a Woman's Wit;
Their Taſk ſhould be by Culture, proper Praiſe,
Still more her Pride of Sentiment to raiſe:
By Reaſoning alone her Will to lead,
And baniſh Trifles, from her Heart and Head.
Who the Fair chuſes, ſmit with Beauty's Charms,
As a mere Play-thing for his longing Arms;
Not as an amiable Friend for Life:
He for an Harlot weds her, not a Wife.

Leſs ſunk in Vice a Woman's Paſſion proves.
She, with a purer Senſe of Merit, loves.
Worth, real or appearing ſuch, her Aim:
More ſteady, fix'd and generous her Flame.
What of Romance, exceeding Nature's Bounds,
Taints her young Years, ſhe builds on ſpecious Grounds.
Sincere herſelf, with credulous Eſteem,
Fondly ſhe fancies Men are what they ſeem:

Thus, ſomewhat vain as well as grateful, grows
The Dupe of Incenſe and of idle Vows.
Hence high Conceptions of her Lover riſe;
'Till ſhe believes, exalted to the Skies
(Such the wild Force of Paſſion and of Whim)
Herſelf a Goddeſs, and an Angel him.
'Tis Men who, with intoxicating Speech,
With ſervile Art, this giddy Leſſon teach.

O ſacred Truth, from whoſe untainted Source
Wiſdom and Worth derive their Charms and Force;
How mean, how miſerable is the Taſk,
Which toils to cover Nature with a Maſk!
The Man, who thee from Love excluded firſt,
His own, and all ſucceeding Ages curſt:
For thence a thouſand dreadful Miſchiefs flow;
Scenes of dire Diſcord and Domeſtic Woe.
Wedlock ſoon bids all mock Pretenſions end:
But Scorn and Hatred in the Rear attend.

Shall Strains, which vile Hypocriſy reprove,
Not brand the mercenary Men of Love?
Men void of ev'ry Principle but Self,
And ſolely ſmitten with the Charms of Pelf:
Fortune's keen Hunters; an enormous Band,
Scatter'd, like hungry Locuſts, o'er the Land.

Senſe,

Senſe, Beauty, Worth, with all the Graces crown'd,
If Wealth is wanting, are an empty Sound.
Not bluſh, ye reptile Worſhippers of Gold,
Who, young in Years, in hoary Vice are old!
While your falſe Flames, diſſembled Raptures riſe;
Not bluſh at your unmanly mean Diſguiſe!
Since, oft poſſeſſing a ſufficient Store,
On any Terms, you wildly covet more;
Have it. --Your abject infamous Regard
Buys dear and richly merits the Reward.

Except where Parents, awfully ſevere,
With their high Will, their Menace, interefere;
Women, more duely delicate than us,
But ſeldom proſtitute the Paſſion thus.
Leſs tainted with the ſordid baſe Deſire,
They boaſt a ſtronger, boaſt a purer Fire;
A better Claim to Truth and Virtue prove,
And ſhame us with their honourable Love.---

Here reſts my Muſe.--Say, Critic ſage and nice;
Once more ſay, what your Cenſure, your Advice?
" I ſay the Subject, ſhould the whole be true,
" Muſt ſeem ill choſen, ſince the Writer you.
" A Bard, high thron'd upon the ſacred Hill,
" Has Leave to rage and bluſter, if he will:

" But for a Novice, for a Name unknown;
" On him the Smile ſits better than the Frown.
" You ſhould exalt, not humble haughty Man.
" To pleaſe his Paſſions were a wiſer Plan;
" If you to gain his loud Applauſe aſpire."---
Yes, if I labour'd for the Sake of Hire.---
" Since Profit you deſpiſe, conſider Fame."---
Mine is, or ſhould be, Sir, a nobler Aim.---
" Prithee, what Aim?" An injur'd Sex to right.---
" It makes me laugh. An injur'd Sex! Good-night."---
Why laugh? Is this a Laugh-deſerving View?---
" An injur'd Sex! Adieu, my Friend; adieu."

THE SCALE:

OR,

WOMAN weighed with MAN.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Senſe, and Woman's Claim to it, the Subject of this Canto. Wiſdom almoſt too divine an Epithet for Human Nature. A Compariſon in Wiſdom waved. Common Senſe the Subject in Diſpute; defined; how rare a thing it is: not acquired without Labour and Study. That Common *is the proper Epithet of Reaſon, not of Senſe. Reaſon eſſential to Man, and Heaven's Witneſs in the Breaſt. Literal* Common Senſe *the ſame with Conſcience. Modeſty the general Companion of ſolid Senſe: inſeparable from Wiſdom: in Men a rare Quality: almoſt the Characteriſtic of Women. Pride of Underſtanding in Men the great Source of Error. In the Fair Sex Humility the Safeguard of Truth. A Tyrannical Diſpoſition the chief Blemiſh of our Nature: deſcends to the Cottage. Reputation for Senſe the great Bone of Contention. The ſhameful Oppreſſion which Women ſuffer in this Reſpect; and the mean Wrong done to them by Witlings. Advice to the Ridiculers of Female Underſtanding. Their own Pretenſions, to Knowledge of the World, Elegance of Taſte, Wit and Humour; weighed. Vanity, the grand Foible of Man, rebuked in the Concluſion.*

THE SCALE, &c.

CANTO III.

WHILE, rouz'd afreſh, my keen advent'rous Muſe,
Her noble, her unpilfer'd Taſk purſues;
And, arm'd for Women, in a bold Defence,
Urges their long-diſputed Claim to Senſe:
Diſtinguiſh'd Portia, She, with modeſt Fear,
Courts thy propitious, courts thy vacant Ear.
To whom, as Senſe the Subject of my Song,
Can this Addreſs, to whom but thee belong?
For Senſe extoll'd, ev'n by the Voice of Men,
O ſmile on Woman's Advocate, my Pen.
Should this, however zealous in the Cauſe,
With Strain not meriting thy wiſh'd Applauſe,
Perhaps ſink far beneath the lofty Theme;
Be the Faults cover'd by the Writer's Aim.

Wiſdom, much talk'd of, ſeldom met with here,
Thy ſecret Reſidence, O Wiſdom, where?
Portia, ſay where (ſince who can better tell?)
Where does the lovely Goddeſs deign to dwell?
What Chains, what Charms her flying Footſteps hold?
The Bond of Pleaſure or the Blaze of Gold?
Does Pow'r attract her? Can the Scepter'd Race,
At Will, this Gem amidſt their Jewels place?
Her Price above the Diamond's Purchaſe ſoars;
Above the Ruby's and the richeſt Ore's.
Not all the pompous Sultans of the Eaſt,
Wallowing in Wealth, ſhall bribe her for a Gueſt.
Vain fooliſh Wantonneſs of human Pride,
To dream that Wiſdom can with Vice reſide!
From cloſe-link'd Virtue never ſeen apart,
Silent ſhe ſparkles in the ſpotleſs Heart.

High Wiſdom, pure as her Æthereal Birth,
But rarely ſojourns with the Sons of Earth.
To her the Scepter of the Skies is given:
She reigns the Daughter and the Queen of Heaven.
When ſhe, to viſit Mortals, Virtue's Friends,
From Angels, from the Sons of God deſcends;
Chiefly to Woman, their great Likeneſs here,
The Seraph comes; her Votary to chear.—

But hold, rash Hand; the lifted Ballance wave.
Thyself the faulty needless Labour save:
For Wisdom is an Epithet divine;
Just Solomon's, and scarcely, Plato, thine.

That most uncommon Thing, call'd *Common Sense*;
Which all Men challenge, with a bold Pretence,
And deem the Birth-right of their Sex and State;
Is here alone the Subject in Debate.

What art thou, *Common Sense*? Thyself explain.
O come, and let the Graces fill thy Train.
My great Apollo thou, be thou my Guide.
Except where Truth and Common Sense preside;
Parnassus, for the Dreams of Fancy fit,
At best is but a Wilderness of Wit.

Reason's right Use is *Common Sense*. How few
This Task of Nature with Attention view.
Foes to stern Study, Men at random think.
They nod and swallow Notions, while they wink.
Crude unexamin'd Follies fill their Heads.
Here idle Wit, there Superstition leads.
Example most, many mere Whim directs.
Alas! Who fairly reasons? Who reflects?

This Plant of Common Senſe, ſo rarely found,
Grows no where but in cultivated Ground.
Unleſs up-rooted by the Lab'rer's Toil,
Rank Weeds will over-run the richeſt Soil;
Nature's wild Moiſture turn to barren Mud;
And Reaſon's Shoots be ſtifled in the Bud.---

Ev'n in low Crafts to gain a proper Skill,
Pains, Time and Teaching muſt attend the Will.
Void of theſe needful Aids, the Head and Hand
Are ſoon, both helpleſs, at an utter Stand.
Some few perhaps, more docile than the reſt,
With a Sagacity, like Inſtinct, bleſt,
The Wheels of Art ſo ſuddenly diſcern;
They rather ſeem to recollect than learn.
But, where Things err from their eſtabliſh'd Courſe,
Such rare Examples are of little Force.

Is Senſe, the faireſt nobleſt Art of Man,
His Judge of Nature and of Nature's Plan;
Which Truth and Falſhood in the Ballance lays,
To form his Taſte, Belief, Contempt and Praiſe:
Is that great Science to Perfection brought,
Without the leaſt Apprenticeſhip of Thought?
This ſcarcely Nature's Fools will ſpeak aloud.
Yet ſuch the plain Pretenſions of the Crowd.

Faſt as their crude Opinions ſpring to Light;
Hence comes their Title to ſuppoſe them right.

Inſtead of *Common Senſe*, Title abſurd,
Place *Common Reaſon* as the proper Word.
Of this indeed all human Minds partake.
It is the noble Eſſence of their Make;
Heav'n's Witneſs, in the Breaſt, of Right and Wrong,
Againſt the vile Blaſphemer's idle Tongue.
With other Men we juggle in Diſcourſe;
And boldly call the better Cauſe the worſe:
But ſtill, for Reaſon's Moral Voice is plain,
We labour to deceive ourſelves in vain.

Reaſon or *Inſtinct*, call her what you will,
Conſcience muſt needs her inward Taſk fulfill.
Knowledge and Senſe, which keen Reflections bring,
Serve but to ſharpen her untutor'd Sting.
This all, howe'er deny'd, muſt feel within,
Who groſsly 'gainſt the Light of Nature ſin.
Yes, Heav'n, to leave us void of all Defence,
Endows us deeply with a Moral Senſe.
If Truth and Meaning ſhould attend the Name,
Then *Common Senſe* and *Conſcience* are the ſame.
But this Men boaſt not: rather they conceal
The Worm which they within their Boſom feel.

With

With ſolid Senſe, as a Companion, join'd
True Modeſty we ſeldom fail to find:
Chiefly, where Wiſdom builds her faireſt Seat,
There the coy Goddeſs chuſes her Retreat.
Eager I quote, a glaring Proof to be,
Thee, wiſe Athenian; Virtue's Martyr, thee.
O ſent of Heav'n; with mereiful Intent,
In Heathen Nature's purblind Reaſon ſent
To cure the groſs Impediments of Sight,
And pave the Way for a diviner Light:
While Athens ſaw, but ſaw with jealous Eyes,
Thy Wiſdom far above Example riſe;
While this Greece own'd, by loud Conviction preſt,
While this ev'n Prieſts, in Oracles, confeſt;
Alone, O lowly Sage, thy modeſt Mind
Remain'd to ſuch applauded Wiſdom blind.
" God only wiſe: to doubt the Part of Man,
" Where certain Truth eſcapes his narrow Span.
" Virtue's pure Precepts and himſelf to know,
" Is his chief Knowledge and his Talk below."
Thy Words, as well thy great Diſciples vouch,
Thy firm Perſuaſion, Socrates, was ſuch.
In thee reſtrain'd, proud Science check'd her Flight;
Nor ſought to ſoar above her humble Height.

Since

Since Humbleneſs of Mind, with modeſt Gait,
Does on imperfect Human Wiſdom wait;
In Men ſeen ſeldom; or, if ſeen, ſoon loſt,
The lovely Badge adheres to Women moſt.
While we, with perſecuting Zeal, contend
By Force the ſtubborn Faith of Souls to bend;
While Sword, Fire, Faggot, Inſtruments of Dread,
Strange Proofs, the Pride of our Opinions ſpread;
Leſs boaſtful of their Underſtandings, they
The Rule of Senſe and Socrates obey.
We, Lords of Reaſon, as we fancy, born,
All Bars, all Limits of Diſcretion ſcorn.
Our Right to judge we plead by Nature's Bull,
And, like high Princes, put it forth at full.
Many, nay moſt, in ſome peculiar Things,
As Fancy leads them, are Deſpotic Kings.
Faith's myſtic Points, the Bounds of Good and Ill
Are ſtrait decided by their Sovereign Will.
To prove their Title equal to their Boaſt,
New, ſingular Opinions pleaſe them moſt;
Which, unexamin'd, oft eſpous'd by Chance,
They firſt perhaps, like Men in Sport, advance;
Next by Degrees, with growing Warmth, defend;
'Till, piqu'd, the Men of Wit in Biggots end.
Pride is the fruitful Source of Error. Thence,
In Sciences, Religion, Common Senſe,
A thouſand Whims of Hereſy commence.

More from this fatal Root of Error free,
Plain Woman loves with Nature's Eye to see.
Her honeſt Underſtanding, unrefin'd,
Sins not, thro' wilful Affectation blind;
Nor ſeeks a ſingular Miſtake to find.
If oft ſhe from this golden Maxim errs,
And Subtleties to ſimple Senſe prefers;
She courts not there the Bubble of Applauſe.
It is not Pride. Humility the Cauſe.
Brow-beat, ſcar'd, over-aw'd a thouſand Ways,
To boiſt'rous Man the Compliment ſhe pays.

With Frailties, Follies, Vices cover'd o'er,
Weak as we are, and ſick of ev'ry Sore;
In that low Pride, which loves to tyranniſe,
The firſt great Blemiſh of our Nature lies.
Not only where, high-ſeated on the Throne,
A Prince conſults his lawleſs Will alone;
Nor yet where Wealth her lofty Forehead rears,
There only Wantonneſs of Power appears.
From Rank to Rank the flowing Vice deſcends;
Till the dry Channel in a Cottage ends.

By Pow'r above him gall'd, the Man of Might
Makes his Reſentment on the weaker light.

They

They next, provok'd and greedy to devour,
Bid the ſtill weaker feel their Weight of Pow'r.
Thus each, by Turns oppreſſing or oppreſt,
Loſes his own and breaks his Neighbour's Reſt.
But chief in Senſe the great Oppreſſion lies:
For Power and Rank and Wealth are ever wiſe.
Would you buy Safety from the Man you fear;
Fail not to pay your humble Homage here.
Court his high Judgment, imitate his Ways;
And ſooth him with the Tribute of your Praiſe:
Leſt rouz'd to Wrath the Pride of Haman be;
Then Woe to Worth that will not bow the Knee!--
If falſe the Charge, Shame is the Poet's Due:
Bluſh, Human Nature, if the Charge be true.

So low the Stations, ſmall the Power of moſt;
In them this Stream of Tyranny ſeems loſt.
Scourg'd by proud Wealth, and govern'd by the Bit,
They ſeem alone to fawn in Fetters fit.
But to the lowly Cottage trace him; ſtill
You'll find the Slave a Monarch in his Will.
Oblig'd to bow the Neck where others come,
The little Tyrant will be wiſe at Home:
And there the weaker Veſſel finds of Courſe,
His Scale of Wiſdom is the Scale of Force.

Us'd more or less, in this Domestic Yoke,
To hear her Reason treated as a Joke;
To find her Claim to Common Sense not born;
She meets elsewhere with a more humbling Scorn;
Meets, ev'ry noble Effort to perplex,
With the Derision of a Lordly Sex;
Who strait, if Women ought but Trifles know,
The Title Wisdom, with a Sneer, bestow;
Nor blush to bid the Cheek of Beauty glow.

Witlings, mean is your proud and partial Sneer.
Not so the Signs of solid Sense appear.
Esteem and Praise, where Sense and Nature guide,
Men, fairly measur'd by the Scale, divide.
Here rul'd by Shame, if not by Virtue's Voice,
Sense, eagle-ey'd, perceives no room for Choice;
Since Praise, if richly due to Men or Things,
A sure Disgrace on the Refuser brings.
But where the lucid Twins, Worth, Wisdom meet,
These with their Favour rising Merit greet.
While haggard Envy blasts, by scornful Ways,
It's tender Buds; they cherish them with Praise;
Afford a Shelter to the young and weak,
And prompt the silent modest Tongue to speak.

Ye, whoſe high Ridicule falls on the Fair;
Who deem the Bud of Senſe in Women rare:
Put home the Queſtion to yourſelves, and ſee
Firſt the true Standard of your own Degree.
Away with ev'ry ſelf-deceiving Art:
For once perform a wiſe and manly Part;
Explore the barren Head and little Heart.
The Muſe, ſhould difficult the Taſk appear,
With her auxiliary Scale is near.

For Knowledge of the World and human Life
You firſt contend, with bold ambitious Striſe.
Vain Fools! what know ye?---" Men and Manners."---
Men!
Say, who the beſt, and who the wiſeſt then?---
" The beſt are Virtue's Friends."---The wiſeſt who?---
" In one Reſpect,---the Friends of Virtue too."---
With an ill Grace your forc'd Confeſſions fall:
But, Triflers, know, this one Reſpect is all.
While the mad dreaming Multitude, while you
Strange Schemes, in Queſt of Happineſs, purſue;
Like Novices, on human Life reflect,
And Bliſs from Vice and Vanities expect:
Each ſkilful Judge of Truth and Nature flies
From the gay Scenes where Death in Ambuſh lies.

The wiſe indeed of either Sex, the good,
Temper'd by Virtue's amiable Mood,
Are prone to be deceiv'd with ſpecious Art.
Plain is the Cauſe; their Innocence of Heart.
Thus oft the ſubtle Hypocrite, the Knave,
Arm'd with low Cunning, triumphs o'er the Brave.
Abhorring all Suſpicion, nobly blind,
Women and Heroes, partial to their Kind,
The Villain late and with Reluctance find.

Now boaſt the Badges of a narrow Soul;
Your ſage Diſtruſt and doubting Senſe extoll.
Nay boaſt the Buckler of a vicious Breaſt;
Since this your Brother Knaves will baffle beſt.
O Wretches, Aliens to the Sweets of Life,
Jealous alike of Servant, Friend or Wife!
On Earth if ſacred Confidence muſt fail;
If wild Suſpicion and Diſtruſt prevail;
Men are already Fiends, or ſomething worſe:
Not Hell could mark them with a greater Curſe.

Who knows the World?---Say Politicians;---we.
Our Province is the Land; and our's the Sea.
That Boaſt, replies the Traveller, is vain.
The Land we challenge, Mariners the Main.---

A Youth, whoſe Cheek is cover'd ſtill with Down,
Swears the firſt Knowledge is to know the Town.
With him the Brothel is the wiſeſt School.
He laughs at Pedants and the College Fool.---
Wing'd by their Cups, the Sons of Bacchus ſoar;
Their Claim aſſerting with a Midnight Roar.
Bold Cenſors theſe on Men and Manners ſit;
And goſſip Scandal in the Guiſe of Wit.
But chief, to ſooth their Vanity, their Gall,
Whole Hecatombs of injur'd Women fall.
Harſh Sentence there the maudlin Judges paſs.
A Female bleeds at ev'ry foaming Glaſs.

Thus for a Shadow, for a ſounding Name,
We ſimply battle, with ambitious Claim.---
While thus our trifling Emulations glow;
Thine, Woman, is the nobler Aim; to know
Thyſelf, thy Station, and thy Taſk below.

Man next for Elegance of Taſte contends.
Juſt here Propriety begins; there ends.
That Face, Park, Palace, Picture pleaſes.---Why?
Nature, without a Rule, informs his Eye.
Of Books, Style, Sentiment, he judges too;
At leaſt not worſe than other Critics do.

If others lean upon the Staff of Art;
The more his Praiſe, who ſcorns a ſtudy'd Part.

Humour's fine Salt, the Seaſoning of Wit,
Are Points much labour'd at, but ſeldom hit.
In theſe proud Man, conquer'd by Shame, will yield;
And ſlowly quit the long-diſputed Field.
There Nature fails him, he will own for once:
But then ſhe doubly makes it up in Senſe.
Plain are his Hints, and his Expreſſions good:
He ſpeaks to make his Meaning underſtood.---

Check, Satire, check thy looſely flowing Rage;
Nor with groſs Cenſure ſtain the ſolemn Page.
In ſuch a wild Extravagance of Boaſt,
The Dignity, the Pride of Man is loſt.
Down, Parallel; nor let the Scale appear:
Spare, Muſe; and, Women, ceaſe your Triumph here.
Leſt Men too low for your Reſentment ſink;
At Vanity, their chief Degrader, wink,
On Faults which ſhould your Indignation raiſe,
Compaſſion waſted is akin to Praiſe.
This, only this let ſilent Pity bear.
Bluſh, weep and wound us with the falling Tear.